



CAPITOL UPDATE

OFFICE OF STATE REPRESENTATIVE
Penny Bernard Schaber

Serving the heart of Appleton



Friends,

As the year 2010 comes to a close, I'd like to take this opportunity to look back over my first term, and update you on some of the accomplishments that myself and fellow legislators achieved. I'm proud to say that during the past two years we have made significant advancements on public safety, health care and job creation.

In 2009, the State Legislature banned smoking in public places, and Appleton led the way. Our city's efforts showed lawmakers around the state that a smoking ban would not hurt small businesses, and that it could actually help. The bill passed on a large, bipartisan majority, earning the support in the Fox Valley of not just Democrats like myself and Rep. Nelson, but Republicans like Rep. Kaufert and Sen. Ellis. The smoking ban was a great example of the two parties working together to find common ground and it has led to better and cleaner indoor air in Wisconsin's businesses.

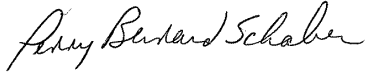
While most of the news on health care reform this year focused on the federal bill, we did make some strides on the state level as well, and again, Appleton was a leader. We passed legislation to bring more transparency to health care costs and quality to help individuals and businesses make better-informed choices about their coverage. We also passed the Mental Health Parity Bill, which requires insurance companies to cover mental health, alcoholism, and other drug abuse treatment services at the same level as other types of treatment. On both of these issues, the Fox Valley's own Theda Care System has been a statewide leader and model for health care providers who put patients before the bottom line.

In response to numerous comments and suggestions from constituents, I worked with my colleagues to protect consumers from unscrupulous businesses, like puppy mills and pay day lenders. In both of these areas, Wisconsin's regulations lagged behind other states, but this session, we finally managed to close the loopholes that allowed these kinds of businesses to exploit vulnerable consumers. I also authored the Check Scam Protection Act, which prohibits companies from sending out seemingly normal checks that commit people or businesses to a contract they did not intend to sign up for, and I'm proud to say it passed on a bipartisan vote and was signed into law by Gov. Doyle earlier this year.

During the past term we passed legislation that will help increase transparency and accountability for elected officials and give voters confidence in the integrity of the political process. The Assembly passed a rule banning its members from fundraising during the budget and worked to pass legislation that would extend those restrictions to state senators and other state elected officials. Additionally, we passed the Impartial Justice bill, which provides for public financing of Wisconsin Supreme Court elections. The upcoming

Supreme Court race this spring will be the first under the new laws, and it is my hope that they provide a good model for extending public campaign financing to other races on the ballot.

My first term has been a busy and exciting one. I have heard from many of you with questions, concerns, comments, and ideas for legislation. It has been a pleasure to serve you. Thank you for helping to make my first term a success.



Penny Bernard Schaber
57th Assembly District

Question of the Month:

What specific issue would you most like to see the Legislature address in upcoming session?

Make sure to send in your response to rep.bernardschaber@legis.wi.gov or to my office at PO Box 8953 Madison, WI 53708. I will make sure to take any input I receive into consideration during my next term.

Blue Books:

The 2011-2012 Blue Book won't be published until next autumn, but the 2009-2010 edition is still available. If you would like a copy, please reply to this email with your name and address, and the words "Blue Book" in the subject line.

Events:

Do you have an event you would like Penny to attend in Appleton? If so, please contact her office at 608-266-3070 or email rep.bernardschaber@legis.wi.gov.

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